

# ABOVE IT ALL

Carmel Designer Jan Gardner Has Created Classic Interiors for this  
Dramatic Log House on the Wooded Slopes Overlooking Lake Tahoe

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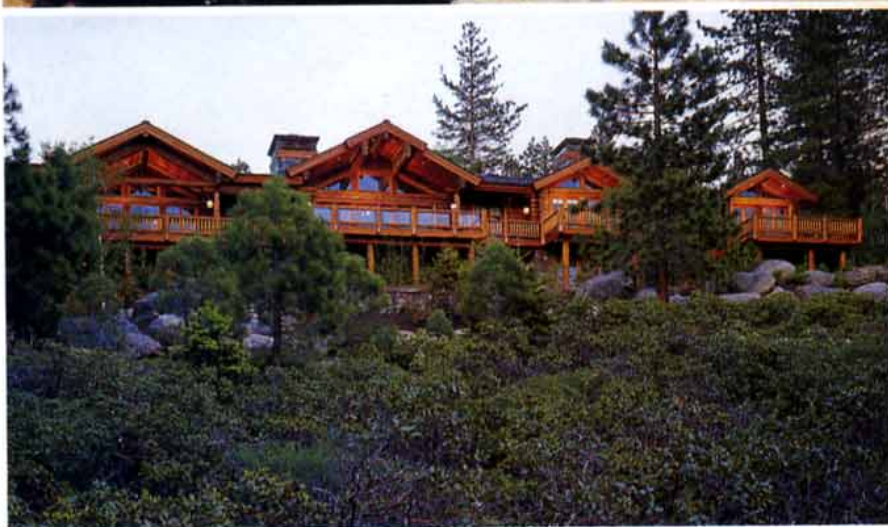
INTERIOR DESIGNER JAN GARDNER has made a fine career over the last thirty years in Carmel, confidently designing decor with great style and comfort.

Gardner and her colleagues at Jan Gardner & Associates have designed classic Carmel cottages, grand Pebble Beach mansions, elegant suites for the Lodge at Pebble Beach, and relaxed Carmel Valley weekend houses. When one of her favorite Carmel Valley clients asked her to work on the interiors for a log house she was planning to build near Lake Tahoe, Gardner was immediately engaged by the challenge.

"I had never designed anything like this log house, but I knew from the start it would be important to avoid all the log house decorating clichés, Gardner says, "and banned all plaid, log furniture, dark leather, bearskins, denim and Navajo rugs. Everyone in Lake Tahoe seems to adore those traditional motifs but I think they're often very heavy-handed and dated-looking. I wanted elegant interiors that were casual with no mountain decor clichés."

The 10,000 square foot house sits at an elevation of 7,200 feet above the lake. The client acquired the land in November 1997. Construction began in August 1998 and the house was completed on January 2001.

The residence was crafted by Alpine Log Homes in Montana to architect Sherry Guzzi's specifications. The log company selected only dead standing trees and ecologically-approved logs. A framework of logs was assembled in Montana, all logs were numbered, then disassembled and trucked to the pine-shaded site. In the meantime, landscape architect Brent Thrans brought in 50-ton rocks to enhance the setting, and planted a small forest of Aspen trees. A stream with waterfalls, designed by Thrans, now cascades around the perimeter of the house.



UPPER RIGHT: On the upper terrace, Gardner created a moment of repose with an overstuffed chaise longue soothed with a chenille throw and overstuffed cushions. LOWER RIGHT: The terrain overlooking Lake Tahoe is steep and heavily forested. The log house, by Alpine Log Homes in Victor, Montana, was carefully sited toward the expansive views and to protect as many pine trees as possible.



THE HILLSIDE HOUSE, oriented to take full advantage of views from every window, includes a living room, a dining room, a large kitchen with a sixteen-foot peaked ceiling and an adjacent breakfast room, a gym, an efficient home office, a master bathroom and three guest suites, a media room, a card room, and a wine cellar. There is also a guest apartment (which includes a living room, a kitchen and two bedrooms) and a three car garage. French doors on all levels open to broad decks and terraces.

Gardner's client, who has a large extended family, along with a menagerie of cats and dogs, wanted the house to be easy-going, and not at all trendy. She would be using the house year-round, so the decor had to work in summer, when swimming, mountain biking, and hiking are favorite pastimes, as well as in winter, when everyone spends the day skiing on nearby runs.

The contractors made artful use of natural materials. Floors are Nevada quartzite, with radiant heat. The roof is Vermont slate. In the living room/dining room, the massive fireplace is crafted of Sierra Antique Rock. Handcrafted iron and copper details finish the chimney caps and the imposing front gates.

Gardner started gathering Turkish rugs, and commissioned hand-woven rugs for the bedrooms.

"Good interior design is good interior design, no matter where it is or what style the architecture may be," says Gardner, who worked closely with her daughter, Julie Gardner-Chesney, on the project. "After our research, we started planning decor in the same methodical way we do all of our interiors. We let the environment speak to us. We listened to the client. And always our goal was balance, harmony, pleasing proportions, and appropriateness." The furniture is generously scaled to enhance the comfort level.

RIGHT: The great room, with a 16-foot ceiling, is the central gathering place for the family and their many guests. Gardner selected large-scale furniture designed by Guy Chaddock. Above the fireplace is an antique French toile grape-gathering basket.















The stone terrace, easily accessible from the breakfast room is used for evening cocktails, Saturday barbecues, summer brunch, and summer entertaining. The overmantel was custom-crafted for the stone fireplace. All outdoor furniture is by Reed Bros.

THIS PAGE: Guy Chaddock chairs upholstered in tapestry and leather surround the bold Guy Chaddock table.





"THE FAMILY AND THEIR MANY guests come in wearing hiking boots or ski attire, they've been out biking all day or cross-country skiing and they want to relax," said Gardner. "I chose textiles like wool tapestries, linen velvets, chenille, wool, paisleys, hand-woven rugs, and Spinneybeck leather that are hard-wearing but soft to the touch."

For the color scheme, Gardner and her team gathered shades of sage, taupe, gold, rust, sand, limestone, palest green, celadon, and cream.

"The architecture and the logs are so overpowering that you really need to keep the colors and the decor calm but never timid," says Gardner. "The key to decorating a log house is to understand the scale. The great room has a ceiling that peaks to sixteen feet. We selected sofas and armchairs that had strong, clear lines with no fuss or frills." Gardner and her daughter designed the iron chandeliers with custom-crafted rawhide shades, repeated in several rooms of the house.

"In all, it was a fabulous learning experience," recalls Gardner. "The contractor, Alan Richards, had an extraordinarily talented team. The carpenters were very creative, always enthusiastic and always willing to experiment. I was in awe of their energy and the fine finish of their work."

Perhaps most important, Gardner's client is thrilled with the house.

"My client loves the house so much, she now spends most of her time there," observed Gardner. "There are spaces to hide in, corners for reading indoors in winter or out in the sun in summer. On each level the house has terraces for enjoying the mountain air and the fabulous Sierra light. The level of craftsmanship and creativity are exceptional. This has been one of my favorite assignments." ❁

UPPER LEFT: The breakfast room, adjacent to the kitchen, faces the lake and is brightened with early morning sun. The chairs and table are by Woodland. LOWER LEFT: In the master bedroom, talented carpenters who worked for two years on the house crafted a canopy from stripped pine trees which has been cleared from the property to make way for the house. The canopy is draped in linen gauze. RIGHT PAGE: In the kitchen, a virtuoso lighting fixture/pot rack hangs over the custom-made granite-topped work island.



